

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: All right. I read the title which has been mentioned here. You can correct.

**Demand for formulating public procurement policy in respect
of SC/ST Entrepreneurs**

SHRI MUKUL BALKRISHNA WASNIK (Rajasthan): Sir, thank you for giving me this opportunity for drawing the attention of the Government towards one very important issue. The Government of India announced the Public Procurement Policy for Micro and Small Enterprises in 2012. This was notified under MSMED Act of 2006. The Policy became operational from 1st April 2012, and its implementation became mandatory from 1st April 2015. Sir, under the Policy, Central Government Ministries, Departments and Public Sector Undertakings are mandated to procure 25 per cent of their annual value of goods and services from micro and small enterprises. This includes four per cent of total procurement of goods and services from micro and small enterprises owned by the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe entrepreneurs. It is now nine years since the policy has become mandatory. I would like to know what the status of its implementation is.

In 2018, the share of enterprises owned by SC/ST in the procurement of goods and services was 0.54 per cent. This was against the mandatory requirement of four per cent. In 2019, it was 0.53 per cent; in 2020, it was 0.55 per cent; in 2021, it was 0.79 per cent; in 2022, it was 0.89 per cent and in 2023, it was 0.88 per cent. The average comes to about 0.75 per cent. Does this reflect any seriousness on the part of the authorities responsible for the implementation of this policy? Certainly not! How long will it take for us to reach four per cent of procurement from SC/ST entrepreneurs if this is going to be the pace? The House is aware that since Independence, though several measures have been taken up to ameliorate the conditions of SC/ST, we still have a long way to go. I, therefore, demand through you, Sir, that the Government at the highest level must intervene immediately and see that the policy for the economic empowerment of SC/ST is implemented in true letter and spirit. So far, the implementation of the public procurement policy has been extremely dismal. Recognising the right of the deprived sections, I urge the Government to take corrective steps without any further delay. (*Time-bell rings.*)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The following hon. Members associated themselves with the matter raised by the hon. Member, Shri Mukul Balkrishna Wasnik: Shri Jose K. Mani (Kerala), Shri Sujeet Kumar (Odisha), Shri Prakash Chik Baraik (West

Bengal), Shri Ajit Kumar Bhuyan (Assam), Dr. John Brittas (Kerala), Shri Niranjana Bishi (Odisha), Dr. Fauzia Khan (Maharashtra), Shri Haris Beeran (Kerala), Dr. Sasmit Patra (Odisha), Shri Pramod Tiwari (Rajasthan), Shri Neeraj Dangi (Rajasthan), Shri Sandosh Kumar P (Kerala), Shrimati Jebi Mather Hisham (Kerala), Shrimati Phulo Devi Netam (Chhattisgarh), Shri M. Mohamed Abdulla (Tamil Nadu), Dr. Kanimozhi NVN Somu (Tamil Nadu), Shri Jawhar Sircar (West Bengal), Shrimati Mahua Maji (Jharkhand) and Ms. Sushmita Dev (West Bengal).

Shri Mohammed Nadimul Haque; 'Need to strengthen the healthcare infrastructure across the country.'

SHRI MOHAMMED NADIMUL HAQUE (West Bengal): Sir, before I start my Zero Hour submission, I just want to say one line.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No; please, you have to speak on the subject. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI MOHAMMED NADIMUL HAQUE: Sir, one line.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Not allowed. That will not go on record. You have to speak on the subject only. Please.

Need to strengthen the healthcare infrastructure across the country

SHRI MOHAMMED NADIMUL HAQUE (West Bengal): Sir, there is a need for developing a resilient healthcare system in the country. The Union Health Ministry reported that 143 people across India had succumbed to heatstroke this summer, based on confirmed data from States as of June 20. However, Sir, the number collected by the TOI from State Governments indicate 209 confirmed heat-related deaths, in addition to 239 suspected deaths, totalling 448 confirmed and suspected fatalities this season. This alarming data underscores the urgent need for a resilient healthcare system in India. Sir, treatment costs of various diseases including cancer also pushes six crore Indians below the poverty line every year. Financial measures must be taken including increasing the health budget and expanding health insurance coverage. Over the years, I must say that the GST on health insurance must be dropped; we appeal to the Minister.

Sir, innovate steps must be taken, therefore, by the Government to increase health insurance coverage so as to ensure that households are not forced to spend from their savings, their hard-earned savings. One example of such scheme